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MONDAY
FEBRUARY 22, 1954

Washington's birthday. A holiday at the U. S. Embassy, unluckily for me. Bright sunshine. Went out this morning, had a walk, and bought some shirts. Lunched with the Clarkes at the British Embassy. The almond trees in the garden are in full bloom, orange trees are bowed down with ripe fruit, and lemon bushes in tubs are a cocktail maker's dream.

I stew over the EDC affair. What a glorious opportunity it presents to the French, who conceived it -- will they have the wisdom at last to seize it?

Cashed checks at the American Express Company at the rate of 620 lira for a dollar. Food and clothing are considerably cheaper in Rome than at Paris.

Gabriel is an amusing dog. Although only seven months old, he is powerful but excessively clumsy. He walks down steps sideways like a crab. His front legs are so bowed that he presents a ridiculous appearance when approaching one. His sunken nose may account for his stertorous breathing that makes him seem to have chronic asthma.

I took a walk with the Piazza del Popolo as my objective. Its beauty never palls. Then I joined E. in the wonderful Piazza di Spagna and we went for tea with the d'Ormessons. This is the second time this attractive man has been Ambassador to the Vatican, first in May 1940 (he was interned not long afterwards), and next in 1948. It is evident that he would not jibe at staying indefinitely. Nor can I fail to understand his point of view. His Government bought, as a residence for its representative several years ago, the villa of Pauline Boneparte, in which she lived for nine years and which she only left at the approach of death to be reconciled to her husband at Florence. (Her body was brought back from there and interred in the Borghese vault at Rome.)

The villa was built in 1750 and was bought by Pauline about 1816, after Napoleon's fall. It eventually became the residence of the German Ambassador

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to the Vatican, and was confiscated after the last war by the Italian Government, which appropriately sold it to the French. The gardens are lovely and the interior beautiful as one could wish. Countess d'Ormesson is a Mexican. Their one regret is that they can so seldom visit their own Chateau d'Ormesson, near Paris, by which I was so smitten when I went there some years ago with John Brown.

d'Ormesson said Virginia and Ashley are already remarkably popular in sharp contrast to their predecessors, the Malletts, who seem to have been singularly inept i their comportment.

He regrets the absence of an American diplomat at the Vatican and thinks we are losing thereby much valuable intelligence. He describes Myron Taylor's later years as personal representative of the President to the Pope as having been unfruitful, the Pope feeling imposed upon by Taylor's excessive demands on his time and by some of his proposals, such as a meeting with the head of the Greek Orthodox Church. I must confess I share d'Ormesson's view. I think Taylor has been partly gaga for some years, and his vanity was very irritating in the contacts I had with him. He was a nuisance at the Paris Embassy, and his last performance, when I was at State and had to rewrite his long and almost illiterate letter to the Pope, confirmed my opinion that distinguished old gentlemen in their dotage should abandon public office.

It is completely stupid for us, because of the religious bigotry of a part of our population, not to have a mission to the Vatican. It is a political, not a religious, question, which the latest nation to recognize as such is Saudi-Arabia. The British and other countries with established official Protestant Churches do not strain and boggle over such recognition. Our own policy in this connection is unworthy of a great nation and deprives us of an ace in the fight against

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Communism. The outcry against representation comes from the same sort of citizens who said -- and perhaps believed -- if Al Smith were elected President the Pope would move into the White House to direct our Government.

Tonight Cornelia and Arthur Lane had us for dinner at the Hotel deghli Ambasciatori, where they have been headquartering for some months. It was a feast in Arthur's old-time manner -- caviar, scampi, filet mignon, and so on, with almost nothing excluded except homard Lane, named for him at the Tour d'Argent in the Twenties. He regards Trieste and emigration as problems essential to settle, or at least to make progress upon, if any healthy government is to survive in Italy. Also, he thinks Clare Luce is too didactic in telling the Italians how handle communism. She is, according to their [redacted] Italian friends, [redacted] unpopular, and the propaganda that bad luck attends her has obtained wide credence. I feel [redacted] sorry for her. No matter how well she did her job she would be fiercely criticized here. Her very beauty, temperament, and talents only increase the fire against her -- it is one country certainly where a woman diplomat is certain to have rough sledding.

I am reading La Vie Quotidienne à Rome à l'Apogée de l'Empire by Jérôme Carcopino. It is surprising to consider his reckoning that under the Antoinnes the capital sheltered over a million inhabitants. His account of the sewage disposal system, the dearth of water and heating is a bit depressing to the comfort-loving modern reader.

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